

COUNTRY DATA: BURMA : Information from the CIA World Factbook

INTRODUCTION

Britain conquered Burma over a period of 62 years (1824-1886) and incorporated it into its Indian Empire. Burma was administered as a province of India until 1937 when it became a separate, self-governing colony; independence from the Commonwealth was attained in 1948. Gen. NE WIN dominated the government from 1962 to 1988, first as military ruler, then as self-appointed president, and later as political kingpin. In September 1988, the military deposed NE WIN and established a new ruling junta. Despite multiparty legislative elections in 1990 that resulted in the main opposition party - the National League for Democracy (NLD) - winning a landslide victory, the junta refused to hand over power. NLD leader and Nobel Peace Prize recipient AUNG SAN SUU KYI, who was under house arrest from 1989 to 1995 and 2000 to 2002, was imprisoned in May 2003 and subsequently transferred to house arrest. She was finally released in November 2010. After the ruling junta in August 2007 unexpectedly increased fuel prices, tens of thousands of Burmese marched in protest, led by prodemocracy activists and Buddhist monks. In late September 2007, the government brutally suppressed the protests, killing at least 13 people and arresting thousands for participating in the demonstrations. Since then, the regime has continued to raid homes and monasteries and arrest persons suspected of participating in the pro-democracy protests. Burma in early May 2008 was struck by Cyclone Nargis, which claimed over 138,000 dead and tens of thousands injured and homeless. Despite this tragedy, the junta proceeded with its May constitutional referendum, the first vote in Burma since 1990. Parliamentary elections held in November 2010, considered flawed by many in the international community, saw the junta's Union Solidarity and Development Party garnering over 75% of the seats. Parliament convened in January 2011 and selected former Prime Minister THEIN SEIN as president. The vast majority of national-level appointees named by THEIN SEIN are former or current military officers

GEOGRAPHY

Location	Southeastern Asia, bordering the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal, between Bangladesh and Thailand
Area	total: 676,578 sq km Land: 653,508 sq km Water: 23,070 sq km
Climate	tropical monsoon; cloudy, rainy, hot, humid summers (southwest monsoon, June to September); less cloudy, scant rainfall, mild temperatures, lower humidity during winter (northeast monsoon, December to April)
Natural Resources	petroleum , timber, tin, antimony, zinc, copper, tungsten, lead, coal, marble, limestone, precious stones, natural gas, hydropower

Total Renewable Water Resources	1,045.6 cu km
Freshwater Withdrawal	total: 33,23 cu km/yr Per capita: 658 cu m/yr
Natural Hazards	destructive earthquakes and cyclones; flooding and landslides common during rainy season (June to September); periodic droughts
Environmental Issues	deforestation; industrial pollution of air, soil, and water; inadequate sanitation and water treatment contribute to disease
PEOPLE	
Population	53,999,804
Ethnic Groups	Burman 68%, Shan 9%, Karen 7%, Rakhine 4%, Chinese 3%, Indian 2%, Mon 2%, other 5%
Religions	Buddhist 89%, Christian 4% (Baptist 3%, Roman Catholic 1%), Muslim 4%, animist 1%, other 2%
Languages	Burmese (official)
Literacy Rate	total: 89.9% Male: 93.9% Female: 86.4%
Major Infectious Diseases	
GOVERNMENT	
Type	military regime
Independence	4 January 1948 (from the UK)
Constitution	3 January 1974; suspended on 18 September 1988
Legal System	based on English common law; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction
ECONOMY	
Agricultural Products	rice; , pulses, beans, sesame, groundnuts, sugarcane; hardwood; fish and fish products
Industries	agricultural processing; wood and wood products; copper, tin, tungsten, iron; cement, construction materials; pharmaceuticals; fertilizer; oil and natural gas; garments, jade and gems
Import commodities	fabric , petroleum products, fertilizer, plastics, machinery, transport equipment; cement, construction materials, crude oil; food products, edible

	oil
Import Partners	China 33.1%, Thailand 26.28%, Singapore 15.18% (2009)
Export Commodities	natural gas, wood products, pulses, beans, fish, rice, clothing, jade and gems
Export Partners	Thailand 46.57%, India 12.99%, China 9.01%, Japan 5.65% (2009)
Per Capita GDP	\$ 1,100 (2010 est.) \$1,100 (2009 est.) \$1,100 (2008 est.)
Population below poverty line	32.7%

*CITATIONS: All information included above is extracted from the CIA World Factbook except where noted.